CT STATE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OPT

WORK AUTHORIZATION FOR F-1 VISA HOLDERS

WHAT IS OPT (Optional Practical Training)? - Temporary work authorization. The purpose of OPT is to gain training in your field of study for **up to 12 months**.

(If you do any pre-completion OPT, you will not be eligible for the full 12 months of post-completion OPT).

TYPES OF OPT:

Pre-completion OPT:

- You may participate in pre-completion OPT **during your studies** after you have been enrolled at CT State for one full academic year.
- You can only work part-time when school is in session.
- You may work part-time or full-time during school breaks.
- Part-time pre-completion OPT accrues at a rate of 50%. For example, 6 months of part-time pre-completion OPT is equal to 3 months of full-time OPT.
- All periods of pre-completion OPT are deducted from the post-completion OPT.

Post-completion OPT:

- You may participate in post-completion OPT **after** you have completed all degree requirements.
- You must have been enrolled at CT State full-time for at least one academic year.
- Job offer is not required.
- You may work part-time (at least 20 hours a week) or full-time.
- You must be present in the US when you apply for OPT.

YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR OPT IF YOU HAD:

- Full-time CPT (Curricular Practical Training) for more than 364 days.
- Already been awarded OPT at the same or higher degree level.

SELECTING YOUR START DATE FOR POST-COMPLETION OPT

Know your I-20/Program End Date or Graduation Date (if different from Program End Date) because it determines the OPT application timeline.

- The earliest start date can be the day after the program end date.
- The latest start date can be **60 days** after the program end date.

You can apply to USCIS no earlier than **90 days** before you complete your degree, but no later than **60 days** after you complete your degree. USCIS must receive your application within **30 days** of your DSO's recommendation in SEVIS.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS – 2 STEPS

Step 1 – Contact your DSO

- Submit your OPT Request Form.
- Go over Form I-765 and OPT Process/Requirements.

Step 2 – Apply to USCIS

- Your DSO will endorse your I-20 for OPT, give you an updated copy, and make suggestions for your Form I-765.
- Submit to USCIS your Form I-765 with supporting documentation, including the filing fee: $470 – online filing, $520 – paper filing.
  Documents to submit with Form I-765:
  - 2x2 inch photo
  - Form I-94 and passport identity page
  - EAD (if previously granted)
  - Form I-20 with previously authorized CPT or OPT (if applicable)
  - Form I-20 endorsed for OPT
- Processing time can be at least 90 days.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ONCE YOU HAVE APPLIED

FOR POST-COMLPETION OPT

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

YOUR POSITION MUST BE:

- In your field of study as listed on your I-20.

- You must work part-time (at least 20 hours per week) or full-time.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR POST-COMPLETION OPT

- Receive an EAD (send a copy to your DSO).
- Create a SEVP Portal account when you receive the link (check your SPAM folder).
- Report your employment on the SEVP Portal.
- Let your DSO know if you move, want to transfer to another school, or leave the US.

TRAVEL ON OPT

Only travel if:

- You are employed in your field of study **AND**
- Have a valid F-1 visa

If you travel, you must have the following documents:

- Valid passport (valid for 6 months after reentry)
- Valid visa
- I-20 with OPT recommendation and travel signature
- Valid EAD
- Employment verification letter

60-DAY GRACE PERIOD

When OPT ends, within 60 days:

- Depart the US **before 60-day** grace period ends.
- Transfer to another academic program.
- Apply for a change of status or another visa type.

For questions, please contact your DSO.